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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/733,455	12/08/2000	Theodore V. Benderev	BENDE-008B	2632

7590 01/30/2007
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EXAMINER

ARAJ, MICHAEL J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3733

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	01/30/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

NT

Office Action Summary	Application No.		Applicant(s)	
	09/733,455		BENDEREV ET AL.	
	Examiner		Art Unit	
	Michael J. Araj		3733	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 04 November 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 6-52 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 6-18, 21-34, 36-42 and 45-48 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 35, 44 and 50-52 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 19, 20 and 49 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on July 25, 2006 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of

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the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Claims 19, 20 and 49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Seitzinger (U.S. Pat. No. 5,362,294) in view of Buncke (U.S. Pat. No. 5,931,855), and further in view of Towfigh (DE 32 27 984 A1). Figs. 1 and 3 of Seitzinger show an organ sling comprising a web sling 10 with a suture line (12/14) attached to each end for securing the sling. However, Seitzinger does not show the suture lines comprising a plurality of V-shaped anchors disposed linearly along each respective line. Buncke teaches surgical methods using so-called "one way" sutures, i.e. sutures having barbs on their exterior surfaces, allowing passage of the needle-drawn suture in one direction through soft tissue, but not in the opposite direction. Buncke's shortcoming is that, while the suture/barb combination is embodied in several different ways, including the barbs being staggered (Fig. 16) or opposed (Fig. 14), the barbs are formed by cutting into the suture material and are therefore an integral part of the suture. Towfigh further teaches a soft tissue closure device similar to Buncke. However, Towfigh teaches the one-way barbs embodied as anchor members comprising generally V-shaped prongs with the suture line extending axially therethrough. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify

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Seitzinger to have "one-way" sutures which would allow the sling to be easily and properly tensioned by simply pulling each suture through the soft tissue and then cutting off the excess suture at the surface of the skin, eliminating the intrusive external suture clamps. Further, it would have been obvious to alternatively embody the suture barbs of Buncke as a plurality of two-pronged, V-shaped anchor members as taught by Towfigh. Note also that although Towfigh only shows one V-shaped anchor member on each end of the suture, it would have been obvious to add additional anchors in order to enhance the security of the device in soft tissue. With regard the statement of intended use and other functional statements i.e. "for permanent implantation", they do not impose any structural limitations on the claims distinguishable over the art disclosed which is capable of being used as claimed if one so desires to do so. *In re Casey*, 152 USPQ 235 (CCPA 1967) and *In re Otto*, 136 USPQ 458, 459 (CCPA 1963).

Furthermore, the law of anticipation does not require that the reference "teach" what the subject patent teaches, but rather it is only necessary that the claims under attack "read on" something in the reference. *Kalman v. Kimberly Clark Corp.*, 218 USPQ 781 (CCPA 1983). Furthermore, the manner in which a device is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from prior art apparatus satisfying the claimed structural limitations. *Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1647 (1987).

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 35,44 and 50-52 are allowed.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed November 2, 2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. With respect to the apparatus claims (19, 20 and 49), the amendments do not impose any structural limitations on the claims distinguishable over the art disclosed which is capable of being used as claimed if one so desires to do so as stated above.

Conclusion


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michael J. Araj whose telephone number is 571-272-5963. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8am-5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eduardo Robert can be reached on 571-272-4719. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



MSA



EDUARDO C. ROBERT
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER